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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Application Number: 09/683,532
Filing Date: January 16, 2002
Appellant(s): BELLOTTI ET AL.

James A. Oliff
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed July 18, 2008 appealing from the Office

action mailed November 19, 2007.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial

proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the

Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection

contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is

correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

Kim, HyoungJun et al. "Implementation of a Workflow-based Web Application

with an Electronic Signature Mechanism," Oct. 22, 1998, ICCT, pp. 1-5.

20020133495A1   Rienhoff, JR et al.   9-2002

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-22 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable

over "Implementation of a Workflow-based Web Application with an Electronic Signature

Mechanism," by KIM, HyoungJun et al in view of Rienhoff, JR. et al. (US Pub No: US

20020133495A1), hereafter referred to as Kim and Rienhoff, respectively.

1. With regards to claims 1 and 10, Kim teaches through Rienhoff, a method for

   transmitting workflow-enabled electronic mail message from a user of a workflow

   system to a recipient, comprising: creating an email message to the recipient by

   the user, the recipient who does not have access to the workflow system (It is

   inherent that since email is sent, it is created; p. 4, left column, last paragraph,

   Kim); determining a network address (p. 4, right column, function 3, Kim);

   embedding a link to the determined network address in the email message to the

   recipient (p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph); associating a process of the workflow

   system with the determined network address (p. 4, right column, function 3, Kim);

and sending the email message having the link to the determined network

address to the recipient, wherein the link provides the recipient with an access to

the associated process of the workflow system (p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph

and p. 2, right column, lines 9-22, Kim).

(Kim however, does not explicitly cite that the recipient does not have

access to the workflow system prior to receipt of the email. In the same field of

endeavor, Rienhoff teaches how a user gains access to a secured area of a site

after clicking on a link that can be received through an email (paragraph 112,

Rienhoff). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during

the time of the invention, to combine the teachings of Kim with those of Rienhoff,

to restrict access to secure content.

2. With regards to claims 2 and 11, Kim teaches the method wherein determining

the network address comprises selecting the network address from a list of

predefined network addresses (p. 3, right column, section "Standard Roadmap

and Database Module," Kim).

3. With regards to claims 3 and 12, Kim teaches the method wherein determining

the network address comprises generating the network address (p. 4, right

column, function 3, Kim).

4. With regards to claims 4 and 13, Kim teaches the method wherein generating the network address comprises randomly or pseudo-randomly generating the network address (p. 2, 2nd column, lines 25-43 and p. 3, 1st column, lines 2-4, Kim).

5. With regards to claims 5 and 14, Kim teaches the method wherein generating the network address comprises generating the network address based on at least in part on information about at least one of at least the created email message, the recipient, the workflow process and the user (p. 2, 2nd column, lines 25-43 and p. 3, 1st column, lines 2-4, Kim).

6. With regards to claims 6 and 15, Kim teaches the method further comprising associating the determined network address with the email message (Figure 2, Kim).

7. With regards to claims 7 and 16, Kim teaches the method wherein associating the determined network address with the email message comprises associating an email address of the recipient to which the created email will be sent with the determined network address (It is inherent that an email address of the recipient must be attached to an email if the email is to be sent).

8. With regards to claims 8, 17, 18 and 19, Kim teaches the method wherein:

determining a network address comprises determining a plurality of different

network addresses (p. 3, section "Standard Roadmap and Database Module,"

Kim); and embedding a link to the determined network address into the email

message to the recipient comprises embedding a plurality of links into the email

message, each link being to one of the plurality of determined network addresses

(p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph, Kim).

(While Kim does not specifically cite the embedding of multiple links within a

single email, Official notice is hereby taken that it is well known in the art, that a

plurality of links can be embedded within an email, for the purpose of sending

multiple links without using multiple messages).

9. With regards to claims 9 and 20, Kim teaches the method wherein associating a

process of the workflow system with the determined network address comprises

associating a different state of the associated process of the workflow system

with each of the plurality of determined network addresses (p. 4, right column,

function 3 and component 3, Kim).

(While Kim does not specifically cite the embedding of multiple links within a

single email, Official notice is hereby taken that it is well known in the art, that a

plurality of links can be embedded within an email, for the purpose of sending

multiple links without using multiple messages).

10. With regards to claim 21, Kim teaches a method for accessing a workflow process using a workflow-enabled email message, comprising: receiving the workflow-enabled email message that includes a link to a network address associated with the workflow process, wherein the network address is specific to the workflow process and to the email message; selecting the link to access the network address, wherein, in response, the workflow system provides access to the workflow process (p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph and p. 2, right column, lines 9-22, Kim).

11. With regards to claim 22, Kim teaches the method further comprising: receiving a request to provide authentication from the workflow system in response to selecting the link; and providing the requested authentication to the workflow system, the workflow system denying access to the workflow process if the requested authentication is not valid (p. 4, right column, component 4, Kim).

12. With regards to claim 25, Kim teaches the method wherein determining the network address further comprises: excluding generated network addresses that have previously been embedded in any previous email messages created by the system that have not yet been accessed (p. 2, 2nd column, lines 25-43, Kim).

13. The obviousness motivation applied in claims 1 and 10 are applicable to claims 2-9, 11-22 and 25

(10) Response to Argument

The first point of contention (argument A) addressed by the applicant concerns

the motivation and how it is allegedly improper since Kim already restricts access to

secure content. The examiner respectfully disagrees that the motivation to combine is

improper. The claimed invention (for instance claim 1) features a link embedded within

an email wherein the link provides the recipient with an access to the associated

process of the workflow system. In response to this limitation the examiner provided the

first prior art of record, Kim. Kim teaches how users gain access to the workflow system

after the receipt of the email embedded with a link (see p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph

and p. 2, right column, lines 9-22, Kim). In the same field of endeavor, Rienhoff also

teaches how a user gains access to a secured area of a site after clicking on a link that

can be received through an email (see paragraph 112, Rienhoff). Users therefore are

able to gain access to restricted areas (such as workflow systems) through the link

within the email as claimed. Hence, the examiner believes that the two prior arts

appropriate to combine together.

The second point of contention (argument B) addressed by the applicant

concerns Rienhoff's design allowing users access to secure content. The applicant

contends that users are only permitted access after logging in with a name and

password. The examiner again respectfully disagrees. The login that the applicant

refers to is related to the general registration with a site. This is equivalent to a person

being entered into a company's email database after getting hired by the company. The

asserted login <u>does not</u> have to occur when accessing the secured area. The user is

able to gain access to secure content within a webpage through a link. Even at that point, a secondary login setup is available but is completely <u>optional</u>. This is evident by the use of the language, "<u>in some embodiments</u>, the user <u>may be</u> given, or requested to establish, an additional login name and/or password to permit them access to the secured area" (see paragraph 112, Rienhoff). Therefore it is the examiner's position that it is evident after reading paragraph 112 of Rienhoff that means are provided wherein a user is able to gain access to a secure area of a web site through a link (equivalent to the claimed gaining access to associated process of the workflow system through a link) and does not require login as asserted by the applicant. In addition the first prior art of record, Kim, also teaches how users gain access to the workflow system after the receipt of the email embedded with a link (see p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph and p. 2, right column, lines 9-22, Kim).

The third point of contention (argument C) addressed by the applicant concerns claims 4-5, and 13-14. The applicant contends that the Kim art does not teach the randomly or pseudo-randomly generating of network addresses. The examiner disagrees with this assertion. The random and pseudo-random generation of data (such as network addresses) is implicitly required in public key cryptographic systems. Public key cryptographic systems require random or pseudo-random numbers for the public keys (support can be found in most cryptography sources including Wikipedia (listed under public-key cryptography)). Kim teaches the use of public keys in p. 2, 2nd column, lines 25-43 and p. 3, 1st column, lines 2-4.

The fourth point of contention (argument D) involves the concept of embedding more than one link within an email. The applicant contends that Kim does not teach such a feature and the presence of such a feature would alter Kim's method of operation. While Kim does not teach such a feature, it is well known in the art and Official Notice is being taken by the examiner to state that the concept of embedding a plurality of links within an email is well known in the art. No alteration in methods of operation is required for embedding multiple links versus one link, within an email. If means are present by which to embed a single link within an email, it is extremely well known within the art that those exact same means can be used to embed multiple links within an email.

The fifth point of contention (argument E) involves the claim 21 limitation of "selecting the link to access the network address, wherein, in response, the work flow system provides access to the work flow process." The applicant contends that the Kim prior art fails to teach such a limitation, the examiner again respectfully disagrees. Kim teaches how users gain access to the workflow system (secured areas) after the receipt of the email embedded with a link (see p. 3, left column, 1st paragraph and p. 2, right column, lines 9-22, Kim). In the same field of endeavor, Rienhoff also teaches how a user gains access to a secured area of a site after clicking on a link that can be received through an email (see paragraph 112, Rienhoff).

The final point of contention (argument F) involves the trait of "excluding generating network addresses that have been embedded in previous emails but have not been accessed." The applicant contends that Kim does not teach such a feature;

the examiner disagrees. Kim teaches in the second column of page 2, within lines 25-40, that the data within the email (including the URL) can be encrypted to prevent it from being exposed. Hence, the URL within each email is unique and the embedding of previous links is avoided.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

/Azizul Choudhury/

Examiner, Art Unit 2145

Conferees:

/Jason D Cardone/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2145

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Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2141